

CLAIMS

Now, therefore, the following is claimed:

- 1           1.       A system for automatically monitoring and reporting upon travel status of  
2 vehicles in response to an activation request by users at remote locations, comprising:  
3               a data manager configured to receive a vehicle indicator and a location indicator,  
4 to automatically correlate said vehicle indicator with a vehicle and said location indicator  
5 with a location along a route of travel of said vehicle, and to transmit a message in  
6 response to a determination that said vehicle is within a predetermined proximity of said  
7 location;  
8               a communications interface configured to receive said vehicle indicator and said  
9 location indicator from a user at a remote location, to transmit said vehicle indicator and  
10 said location indicator to said data manager, and to receive said message from said data  
11 manager and to transmit said message to said user.

- 1           2.       The system of claim 1, wherein said communications interface is one or  
2 more telephone interface devices.

- 1           3.       The system of claim 1, wherein said proximity is defined by time.

- 1           4.       The system of claim 1, wherein said proximity is defined by distance.

1           5.     The system of claim 1, wherein said proximity corresponds with a  
2     predetermined ~~location~~ along said route of travel.

1           6.     The system of claim 1, wherein said vehicle is a bus and said location is a  
2     bus stop.

1           7.     The system of claim 1, wherein said vehicle indicator identifies said  
2     vehicle and said location indicator identifies said location.

1           8.     The system of claim 1, further comprising a vehicle manager configured to  
2     transmit travel data to said data manager via a control channel of a cellular network.

1           9.     The system of claim 1, further comprising a vehicle manager configured to  
2     transmit said travel data to said data manager via a voice channel of a cellular network.

1           10.    The system of claim 1, further comprising a vehicle manager coupled to  
2     said vehicle and ~~configured~~ to transmit travel data to said data manager in response to a  
3     determination that said vehicle is off schedule.

1           11.    The system of claim 1, wherein said data manager further comprises a  
2   monitoring mechanism configured to receive travel data from said vehicle, to compare  
3   said travel data with a coordinate value indicating a proximity of said location, and to  
4   correlate said travel data with said coordinate value based on said vehicle value and said  
5   location value.

1           12.    The system of claim 11, wherein said data manager further comprises a  
2   message manager configured to retrieve contact information in response to a signal from  
3   said monitoring mechanism and to transmit said contact information to said second  
4   communications device, said contact information enabling said second communications  
5   device to transmit said message to said user, wherein said monitoring mechanism  
6   transmits said signal in response to said determination.

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1 13. A system, comprising:  
 2 a data manager configured to receive a vehicle indicator and a location indicator,  
 3 to retrieve location data based on said location indicator, to correlate said location data  
 4 with travel data based on said vehicle indicator, to compare said location data to said  
 5 travel data, and to transmit a message in response to a determination that said vehicle is a  
 6 predetermined proximity from a first location along a route of travel of said vehicle, said  
 7 location data indicating said first location and said travel data indicating a second location  
 8 of said vehicle along said route of travel;  
 9 a communications interface configured to receive said vehicle indicator and said  
 10 location indicator from a user at a remote location, to transmit said vehicle indicator and  
 11 said location indicator to said data manager, to receive said message from said data  
 12 manager, and to transmit said message to said user.

15 14. The system of claim 13, wherein said communications interface is one or  
 2 more telephone interface devices.

1 15. The system of claim 13, wherein said data manager automatically retrieves  
 2 said location data and automatically correlates said location data with said travel data in  
 3 response to receiving said vehicle indicator and said location indicator.

14  
 1 16. The system of claim 13, further comprising a vehicle manager configured  
 2 to transmit said travel data to said data manager via a control channel of a cellular  
 3 network.

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[illegible]

a bus stop.

1

a bus stop.

22. The system of claim 13, wherein said vehicle indicator identifies said vehicle and said location indicator identifies said first location.

1           23.    A system for automatically monitoring travel of vehicles in response to an  
2 activation request by users at remote locations, comprising:

3               means for receiving a vehicle indicator and a location indicator from a user at a  
4 remote location;

5               means for identifying a vehicle based on said vehicle indicator;

6               means for monitoring travel of said vehicle;

7               means for retrieving location data based on said location indicator;

8               means for comparing said location data to travel data associated with said vehicle;

9               means for determining whether said vehicle is within a predetermined proximity  
10 of a location defined in data by said location data; and

11              means for transmitting a message to said user in response to a determination by  
12 said determining means that said vehicle is within said predetermined proximity of said  
13 location.

1           24.    The system of claim 23, further comprising a means for updating said  
2 travel data in response to a determination that said vehicle is a predetermined proximity  
3 from a predetermined point.

1           25.    The system of claim 23, wherein said retrieving means and said identifying  
2 means are automatic.

1        26.    The system of claim 23, further comprising a means for correlating said  
 2    travel data with said location data based on said vehicle indicator and said location  
 3    indicator.

1        27.    The system of claim 23, further comprising:  
 2        means for retrieving contact information associated with said user in response to  
 3    said determination; and  
 4        means for transmitting said message based on said contact information.

1        <sup>27</sup>28.    The system of claim <sup>25</sup>23, further comprising a means for communicating  
 2    said travel data via a control channel associated with a cellular network.

1        <sup>29</sup>29.    The system of claim <sup>27</sup>28, wherein said communicating means includes a  
 2    means for changing an identifier associated with said communicating means.

1        <sup>29</sup>30.    The system of claim <sup>27</sup>28, wherein said communicating means includes a  
 2    means for appending said travel data to a feature request.

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1        31.    A method for automatically activating a vehicle tracking system,  
2    comprising the steps of:  
3        receiving a vehicle indicator and a location indicator from a user at a remote  
4    location;  
5        identifying a vehicle based on said vehicle indicator;  
6        monitoring travel of said vehicle;  
7        retrieving location data based on said location indicator;  
8        comparing said location data to travel data associated with said vehicle;  
9        determining whether said vehicle is within a predetermined proximity of a  
10    location defined in data by said location data; and  
11        transmitting a message to said user in response to a determination in said  
12    determining step that said vehicle is within said predetermined proximity of said location.

1        32.    The method of claim 31, further comprising the steps of:  
2        assuming that said vehicle is a predetermined proximity from an assumed location  
3    based on an assumed rate of travel for said vehicle; and  
4        updating said travel data in response to a determination that said vehicle is outside  
5    of said predetermined proximity.

1        33.    The method of claim 31, wherein said retrieving step and said identifying  
2    step are automatic.



1           34.    The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of correlating said  
2 travel data with said location data based on said vehicle indicator and said location  
3 indicator.

1           35.    The method of claim 31, further comprising the steps of:  
2 retrieving contact information associated with said user in response to said  
3 determination; and  
4 transmitting said message based on said contact information.

1           <sup>33</sup>  
~~36.~~    The method of claim <sup>30</sup>~~31~~, further comprising the step of communicating  
2 said travel data via a data channel associated with a cellular network.

1           <sup>34</sup>  
~~37.~~    The method of claim <sup>33</sup>~~36~~, further comprising the step of changing an  
2 identifier associated with a communications device transmitting said travel data.

1           <sup>35</sup>  
~~38.~~    The method of claim <sup>33</sup>~~36~~, further comprising the step of appending said  
2 travel data to a cellular feature request.

1           39.     A method for requesting a vehicle monitoring system to monitor a  
2 particular vehicle, comprising the steps of:  
3           receiving a vehicle indicator and a location indicator, said vehicle indicator  
4 identifying said vehicle and said location indicator indicating a location along a route of  
5 travel of said vehicle; and  
6           monitoring said vehicle automatically in response to said vehicle indicator and  
7 said location indicator.

1           40.     The method of claim 39, further comprising the steps of:  
2           determining whether said vehicle is a predetermined proximity from said location;  
3 and  
4           automatically transmitting a message to a remote location in response to a  
5 determination that said vehicle is said predetermined proximity from said location.